

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (Original) A continuous mode electronic ballast for operating an HID lamp comprising:
  - an inverter circuit configured to generate a control signal;
  - a resonant circuit, configured for operational coupling to the inverter circuit and to the lamp to generate resonant voltage in response to receiving the control signal;
  - a clamping circuit, operationally coupled to the resonant circuit to limit the voltage across the resonant circuit to protect components of the ballast; and
  - a multiplier circuit, operationally coupled to the resonant circuit to boost the voltage clamped by the clamping circuit to a value sufficient to permit starting of the lamp, wherein
    - the clamping circuit and the multiplier circuit cooperate to facilitate a continuous starting of the lamp.
2. (Original) The ballast according to claim 1, wherein the multiplier precludes forward biasing of diodes to accomplish a lower power dissipation.
3. (Original) The ballast according to claim 1, wherein the multiplier precludes forward biasing of diodes realizing a DC bias of  $\pm 0.25V$  or less.
4. (Original) The ballast according to claim 1, further including:
  - a blocking capacitor, operationally connected in series with the lamp and between a terminal and a terminal.
5. (Original) The ballast according to claim 4, wherein the multiplier is operationally connected to the terminals to multiply an output voltage of the inverter at the terminal and store negative charge into the blocking capacitor through the terminal.